



Wayfinders Discernment Exercises

“Discernment” originally meant “sifting”, distinguishing the true from the not-so-true, the good from the not-so-good.

Right now we want to distinguish the **you** from the **not so you**.

These exercises are designed to get you to think about yourself in a deeper way than you are called to do everyday. They will help you to discern and name your own **gifts** (particularly the ones which have been buried for a while), your **current circumstances**, and also some of your **God-given hopes and dreams**. I like to think of them as three big bags to sift through.



Your many gifts



Where you are today



What do you wish were true?

These are the three big sets of clues God has put into your life to help you figure out where to go next.

Some exercises will appeal to you, and some may leave you stumped, or cold. That’s fine. Do the ones that inspire you, or get you writing the most.

And when an exercise asks you to dream, please do us all in the world a favor: Dream BIG.



20 Things I Love Doing

Below, write down at least 20 things you love to do. They can be as simple as eating an apple or as profound as working for world peace.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.
- 11.
- 12.
- 13.
- 14.
- 15.
- 16.
- 17.
- 18.
- 19.
- 20.



When I was a child, and no one needed me anywhere, you could always find me doing this:

One activity that I can do for hours and lose all sense of time is:

Here's another one:

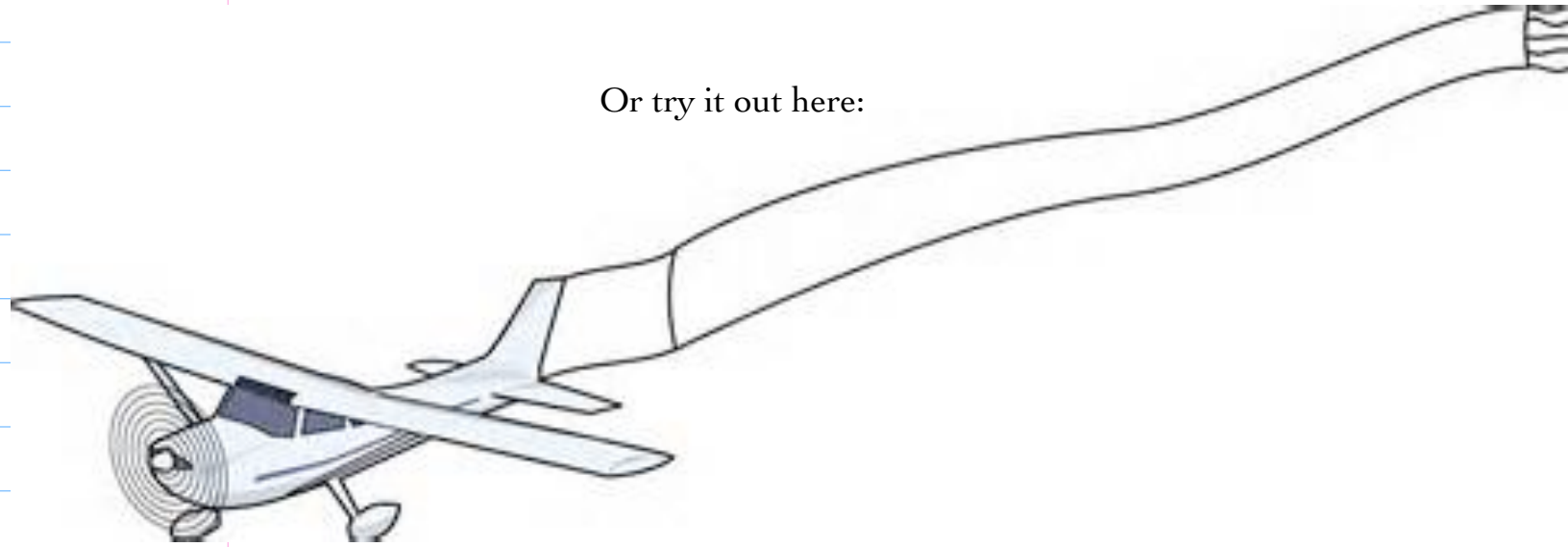
Do you have any "happy" obsessions - things you can't leave alone? Questions, concerns, problems, issues that you return to over and over again because they fascinate you, they move you, they excite you, they get you to ask more and more questions? If so, what are they?



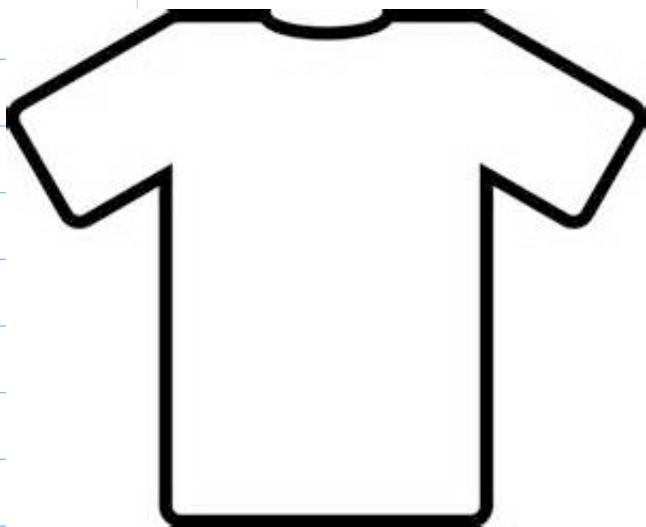
Let's say you've been given the chance to get a message across to every single person in the world. You can say anything you want: a piece of hard-earned wisdom, something inspiring, something to make people smile,....What would you say?

Try out a message here:

Or try it out here:



Or here



FRONT



BACK



What would you attempt if you were brave enough to try?

The psalmist writes: *"Take delight in the Lord and he will give you the desire of your heart."* Your gladness and your desires are important to God and are part of the way that God has shaped you to live a full life in God's kingdom. It was the key belief of St. Ignatius of Loyola *"that our recurrent deep desires are regarded as important indications of God's will for us."*

When do you experience deep joy? What is happening around you when gladness wells up inside?

Regrets are a part of any long life. But occasionally, they can be a prompt from God to take action. What is your biggest regret? Could God be calling you to examine that feeling more closely - and maybe do something about it? If you were to leave this world tomorrow, is there some "unfinished business" you'd regret not having done?



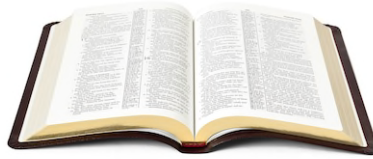
Your Marvelous Day

You have just taken the most marvelous vacation, where you were able to deeply refresh your mind, body, and spirit. Now you are back, and have woken up brimming with energy, on a day where you have no appointments or chores at all.

What would your day look like? (Use lots of sensory details to make it vivid for yourself.) Would you continue to rest? Would you be up and into projects that feed you? Would you zip over to St. Ann's (or the Y, or the soup kitchen, or a friend's house) and say, "Put me to work!" Would you connect with your own family? Would you go back to bed? You can include all of these things (and any more you think of).

When you are done, re-read what you have written. Is there something God may be calling you to make room for in your life? Sabbath rest? Some way to love and serve your neighbor? Something creative and completely new? Or something you put down a while ago and miss?





Scripture is a rich resource as we listen for the voice of God. Write down a passage (or more than one) that resonates with you, or perhaps has always resonated with you.

What might this passage mean for you, right now, in your life? Journal freely. Might God be leaving a clue for you here?



Take more paper if you need it!





One way God speaks eloquently to us is through the gifts he gives us. Having a thorough knowledge of what you have to give and share is crucial to figuring out your next steps.

So, we are going to look more closely in that pack full of gifts you carry along with you. As they occur to you throughout the retreat, **note them down** (this page is flagged to make it easier).

My **spiritual gifts**: (compassion, patience, generosity, humor, perseverance, wisdom, faith....)

My **in-born sensitivities** (to words, color, music, nature (or a particular part of nature), how things work, people's feelings, stories, etc.)

My **important experiences**, good or bad, that have marked and changed me:

What am I fascinated by? What can I do for hours and lose all sense of time? What part (s) of creation do I take particular delight in?



"There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work." (1 Corinthians 12:4-6)

What experiences have affected me the most? Do they point me anywhere? Do I have wisdom to share?

My **temperament**: Am I introverted, extroverted, calm, competitive, mellow, silly, serious...?

What kind of situation brings out the best in me?

What is the difference between Sensitivities and Skills?

During the retreat I use the term “**sensitivities**” to refer to the **what you’ve always naturally noticed and taken delight in**. I believe these are hard-wired into you, to a large extent. If you look at what you gravitated to as a child, you’ll probably see some of your sensitivities, things like a love of music, or of words, or of color and light; an abiding curiosity about what makes machines - or people, or animals, or the universe - tick. A fascination with nature (or a particular part of nature such as birds, rocks, the ocean....); a love of debating ideas, or building things, or taking things apart - the list is endless.

Skills are things **you’ve been taught**. So you might have a sensitivity to languages and picking them up easily, but the skill would be speaking Arabic or German.

Having said that, don’t worry about the distinction too much - just write that gift down somewhere!

The skills I’ve learned (organizing, leading, painting, programming, sewing, working with machines, problem solving, speaking other languages, playing an instrument, playing a sport, throwing parties, making presents, telling jokes...you name it!)

What skills do I have that give me joy/satisfaction to use?

My money and possessions.

Have I ever given away some item or some money and it made a real difference? Why? Do I have anything that I can spare or lend that might really help someone?

Every **moment of time** I’ve been given.

What is one time-waster in my life I'm ready to give up? What is something I could do for 15 minutes a day that would change my life for the better?

My physical gifts: Stamina, strength, good health, speed, flexibility, nimbleness.....

What physical gifts do I have? Am I taking some for granted? Do I need to replenish and restore my body? Do I need more rest? Or play?



Your gifts, illuminated by the Spirit of God... where might they be calling you next?



More thoughts/questions/ideas (take more paper if needed)

DISCERNMENT EXERCISES

